

1) Project Overview (150/150)

CA.gov is the official site of the most populous and diverse state in the union; it serve 38 million residents, and also meets the needs of individual users. While emphasizing the use of state-wide branding, the CA.gov model allows flexibility so individual departments have the freedom to create their own image and message. It is through this process of amalgamating seemingly disparate needs that the true beauty of CA.gov portal is seen. CA.gov serves both the entire population and the individual, embraces both the cutting-edge and the accessible, creates standards and allows individual departments the freedom to live up to those standards. This unique balance, driven by our development community, has made CA.gov the embodiment of values that state portals strive to encompass: innovation, functionality, efficiency and accessibility. As a result, CA.gov enjoys worldwide recognition with the state's templates being used by cities, counties and other countries for their sites.

2) Innovation: *How well does the entry meet the criterion for innovative use of technology and/or innovative approaches?* (500/500)

California is the home of technological innovation. California companies are inventing the future of information management and presentation and California government intends to be consumers of these innovative applications of proven private-sector technologies. These applications are increasing access to information in familiar and comfortable delivery mechanisms.

- California has instituted a Wiki to promote best practices within state agencies and among employees. This format makes expertise communicable on an enterprise-wide basis. <http://www.bestpractices.ca.gov/>
- California has created its own YouTube.com channel allowing California's citizens to watch videos created by their state government on topics ranging from driver safety to filing California State income tax. To date, 308 videos have been posted. <http://www.youtube.com/californiagovernment>
- Ca.Gov offers podcasts, http://ca.gov/multimedia_podcasts.html, on interesting topics including:
 - A presentation about one of California's 278 State parks
 - Oral arguments in the US Court of Appeals
 - A lecture from one of California's public universities

This keeps Californians informed about issues important to them in an accessible and convenient way.

- Really Simple Syndication (RSS), identified on the site by the universal RSS logo, allows for easily updating State Highlights (http://www.ca.gov/multimedia_rss.html)

and Podcasts. RSS also allows users to subscribe to updates via a feed reader (<http://feeds.feedburner.com/StateOfCaliforniaPortalHighlights>) or XML file (<http://www.ca.gov/rss/CA-gov-feed.xml>).

- Ca.Gov is mobile enabling users to receive alerts and updates on their portable devices, and keeping Californians on the move. <http://www.mobile.ca.gov/>

The challenges confronting California are as different and dynamic as her 38 million citizens. Ca.Gov's innovative ways of connecting citizens with their government gives unprecedented access to constituents; allowing them to address their concerns and informing them of what their government is doing to keep California great.

- Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's speaking events are webcast live, and then archived, in video and transcript form, within the day. <http://gov.ca.gov/>
- The Governor's weekly radio addresses speak to Californians directly regarding administration goals. http://gov.ca.gov/gov_rss/index/
- Interactive web discussions allow citizens to submit questions, in real time, to Cabinet-level public officials, special advisors to the Governor, and often, the Governor himself. <http://gov.ca.gov/interact>
- Written and video blogs are posted by administration officials regarding the challenges facing California and the administration's response to those challenges. <http://www.gov.ca.gov/blog>
- An interactive timeline lets constituents see chronological key Governor Office events and press releases. <http://www.gov.ca.gov/news-room/timeline2008>

California's extensive use of GIS mapping applications highlights our beautiful state and is part of our dedication to present information using the newest delivery methods and ensure that information is communicated in an effective and meaningful way. In California, innovation facilitates better communication.

- The Department of Waterways and Boating uses a Google map function that allows portal-users to see details on boating access points. <http://www.dbw.ca.gov/maps/inlinemap.asp>
- Users of CA.gov can also locate Department of Motor Vehicle field offices, see wait times, and make appointments online. <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/fo/offices/locator/locator.htm>
- CA.gov employs GIS to provide users with weather updates. http://ca.gov/weather_map.html

- Maps of California's highway system relay real-time speed averages, and traffic density giving users immediate and specific information about the extent of traffic on our state's highways.

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/travel/index.php?submit=Go%20To%20High%20Speed>

3) Functionality: *How well does the entry meet the four components of this criterion: usability, accessibility, security, and privacy?* (500/500)

Our goal is to make CA.gov the premier purveyor of California information and services to California's 38 million citizens. To meet this goal, CA.gov is organized in a clean and easily navigable interface that emphasizes templates, branding, and quick-loading.

- California's usability guidelines are accessible to our webmasters through a website called Webtools. <http://www.webtools.ca.gov/>. 119 distinct agencies, departments, boards, and other constitutional offices are using Ca.Gov's templates when building their sites. http://www.eservices.ca.gov/website_examples/default.asp

- The primary goal of the CA.gov design is to present information in a clean, uncluttered display. The California template provides standards to communicate information in a familiar, thoughtful presentation.

http://www.webtools.ca.gov/State_Template/. Including:

- Layout
- Brands
- Color Schemes

- California's standard template is founded on leading-edge standards for coding, specifically XHTML, CSS and SSI.

- Ca.gov interacts with its users by:

- Employing feedback and regular re-evaluations, ensuring that our functionality is always improving.
- Operating a live help desk using students to provide any information constituents need to better their CA.gov experience.

<http://www.ca.gov/LiveHelp.html>

CA.gov – as a government site – has an obligation to serve all Californians. The 2000 census indentified 6.2 million Californians with a disability. Our webmaster community has developed a special sensitivity to this and when it comes to balancing “glitzy” applications with accessible technology, California always chooses accessibility. Our choice, as a function of our obligation, demonstrates that CA.gov doesn't use technology for technology-sake, but as a tool for providing better service to *all* Californians.

- CA.gov decided to forgo site-based text sizing in favor of instructing users how to change text size through the browser. (<http://www.ca.gov/accessibility.html#Font>)

Our method gives more control to visually-impaired users who need larger text sizes in order to read; our decision place the highest value on compliance with accessibility law.

- Webtools provides an accessibility section, ensuring website compliance with federal law and CA.gov accessibility standards.
<http://www.webtools.ca.gov/Accessibility/>
- Our sensitivity extends past federal and state compliance, and makes California an agent of “best practices”. To meet this end, California’s Department of Rehabilitation and the Information Organization, Usability, Currency & Accessibility (IOUCA) Working Group (<http://www.cio.ca.gov/stateIT/portal/iouca.html>) developed additional accessibility recommendations (http://www.webtools.ca.gov/Accessibility/State_Standards.asp).
- Accessibility requires not just implementation, but constant testing and re-evaluation. This keeps California innovative without sacrificing accessibility.
http://www.webtools.ca.gov/Accessibility/Maintaining_Accessibility.asp
- One of California’s hallmarks is its diversity; we celebrate this diversity by offering a Spanish portal. <http://www.ca.gov/Espanol.html>

CA.gov offers over 400 online services (<http://www.ca.gov/OnlineServices.html>) that are organized for optimum usability and protected by California’s enhanced security and privacy policy. Including:

- The ability for taxpayers to e-file with the Franchise Tax Board and the Board of Equalization. http://www.ca.gov/OS_Business.html#taxes
- Services aimed at protecting consumers, including: filing a complaint with the Department of Consumer Affairs, the Public Utility Commission, or the Contractor State Licensing Board. http://www.ca.gov/OS_Consumers.html
- Replacing the process of going to a DMV office by offering DMV services online (http://www.ca.gov/OS_Driving.html#driving):
 - Ordering specialty or motorcycle plates
 - Renewing your driver license or vehicle registration
 - Filing a notice of transfer and release of liability form
 - Requesting a refund

4) Efficiency and Economy: *How well does the entry meet the criterion for realizing financial and operational efficiencies? (500/500)*

We hear from users that the value of CA.gov is immense. We have achieved and sustained this value, through the Webtools website and a webmaster community, has a quantifiable financial benefit.

- In 2007, when the mandate went out for standardization across state websites to enhance usability and accessibility many of the web developers thought it was simply a case of “history repeating itself”. Not this time! No longer did Web developers need to fend for themselves. No longer did agencies need to hire consultants. Instead, they soon found that Webtools provided the tools and information necessary to convert or create standards-based websites. Furthermore, with Webtools, agencies avoided an estimated \$56 million in implementation costs because they did not have to incur any new hardware or software costs. Enterprise-wide leadership led to the realization of this organizational efficiency and a significant savings to taxpayers.
- A search engine is provided at no cost to state departments. Currently there are more than 90 users of the state’s Google search engine, avoiding the cost of millions of dollars that each department would have needed to procure their own search capability.
- By promoting the use of sitemap protocol the state increased the amount of information that could be found through Google and other major search engines. No financial investments, just a little staff time, California made its government more transparent by making more than 100,000 pages of information visible to search engines.

The California portal does not just realize efficiency and economy through its design but also a number of applications with the sole purpose of helping Californian businesses and employees. Facilitating employers and employees keeps California’s 7th in the world largest economy growing and dynamic.

- California state departments now have access to a store of professional experience and know-how through the retired state annuitants’ job connection site, Boomerang. <http://www.boomerang.ca.gov/>
- The California Business Portal is a one-stop-shop for business either operating in, or hoping to operate in California. The business portal provides the necessary information on starting or growing a business in California, including: labor laws, necessary license and permits, tax information, and directions to apply for loans and grants. <http://www.calbusiness.ca.gov/>
- Ca.Gov organizes grants applications from state, federal, and private foundations into easily identifiable categories. This site makes sure Californians who make our state great: researchers, farmers, students and homeowners, know what programs are available to help keep them in California. <http://www.ca.gov/Grants.html>

Ca.Gov has made an art of setting up “one-stop shops” for citizens to get answers on California’s most pressing matters. This logical clustering of services and information makes Ca.gov an extension, and sometimes the embodiment, of administration responses to public problems.

- The administration pooled information and options for those Californians facing foreclosure from the subprime mortgage crisis. <http://www.yourhome.ca.gov/>
- Data on California’s historic fight against global climate change can now be found in one place. <http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/>
- First line response to information and services concerning California’s past and future wildfires are easily and effectively accessed.
<http://www.rebuildyourlife.ca.gov/>

4) Monthly Average of Unique Visitors:

The CA.gov portal gets an average of 887,719 unique visitors a month.

5) List of Private-Sector partners:

- Google - Statewide search
- Human Factors International - Usability review of old site and recommendations
- Symsoft - Webtools concept development
- LiveHelper - Online chat
- Diana Persell - usability review of new site and recommendations
- A host of private-sector vendor services including
 - Google for mapping
 - YouTube for video hosting
 - Feedburner for RSS syndication
 - AddThis for social bookmarking